The West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative

A Shared Partnership

Trafficking and Organized Crime – A Direct Threat to US National Security

West Africa is facing a growing danger from transnational criminal organizations, particularly narcotics traffickers, whose activities threaten the collective security and regional stability interests of the United States, our African partners, and the international community. Illicit markets and those who profit from them weaken public institutions, foster corruption, and foment violence. Combating these organizations requires an integrated U.S. whole-of-government approach in close coordination with our African and international partners. To address this threat, U.S. government agencies collaborated to create WACSI. The U.S. government, in consultation with African and international partners, will seek opportunities to complement and enable regional and national initiatives that seek to achieve similar objectives.

WACSI: An Integrated, Collaborative Regional Security and Rule of Law Program

Criminal networks are multidisciplinary and transnational, which is why WACSI draws on expertise from across the U.S. government and is built on cooperation with our international partners. The United States is committed to fight transnational organized crime (TOC) around the world – including in West Africa.

The Five Goals of WACSI:

1. **Build accountable institutions;**
2. **Establish legal and policy frameworks to counter transnational organized crime;**
3. **Strengthen security operations;**
4. **Reinforce justice operations; and**
5. **Address the socio-economic causes and consequences of transnational organized crime.**

WACSI will implement a multi-layered approach that will target certain nations to strengthen anchor country capacities; invest in future anti-TOC partnerships; and build on regional and inter-regional networks to effectively support our African partners address their assorted challenges and approaches.

U.S. Assistance – Meeting the Threat – Building Capacity

The U.S. government has identified existing and new U.S. assistance to support this initiative and it is anticipated that additional U.S. government resources will be dedicated to support it in the future. Programming under WACSI will be aligned with the five pillars to focus efforts such as:

1. Technical assistance and capacity building to help governments and civil societies develop the skills to combat impunity;
2. Technical assistance drafting anti-TOC laws and policies, assisting in the process of getting these laws enacted, and creating awareness about the laws and policies on anti-TOC;
3. Investing in elite counternarcotics units, operational training and equipping of accountable institutions, and technical assistance to build basic law enforcement skills and institutional capacity;
4. Technical assistance to build the capacity of prosecutors and judges to prosecute and adjudicate complex TOC cases; and
5. Drug demand reduction and raising public awareness of TOC.